

TIPPECANOE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING
AUGUST 28, 2002

The Tippecanoe County Commissioners met on Wednesday, August 28, 2002 at 10:00 A.M. in the Tippecanoe Room in the County Office Building. Commissioners present were: President John L. Knochel, Vice President KD Benson, and Member Ruth E. Shedd; Auditor Robert A. Plantenga, Commissioners' Assistant Jennifer Weston, County Attorney David W. Luhman, and Secretary Pauline E. Rohr.

President Knochel called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance. He asked Attorney Luhman to explain the process necessary to comply with the Council's request to lower the Cum Bridge Levy and divert Cum Bridge interest for one year to help the General Fund.

Attorney Luhman explained that, due to inadequate County General funds for the 2003 Budget, the County Council asked the Commissioners to reduce the 2003 tax levy for the Cum Bridge Fund so the tax levy for the General Fund can be raised. This action is necessary because the County is not allowed to increase the levy more than 5% and the General Fund and the Cum Bridge Fund have to work in parity with each other. He said the Auditor determined, if the reduction is enough to lower the Cum Bridge Maximum Levy to approximately \$2.1 million, over \$900,000.00 can be raised for the General Fund Levy.

Since the request is for one year only, it will be necessary for the Commissioners to go through the process to restore the Cum Bridge Levy to its current rate for 2004.

Commissioner Shedd asked Highway Executive Director Mark Albers to explain the impact of this action on the Cum Bridge Fund.

Mr. Albers said the approximate balance in the Cum Bridge Fund is \$33,000,000.00. That is used to maintain 172 existing bridges and any new bridges or additional bridges the County will take over by agreement from INDOT. Obligations:

- \$8 million in matching funds to INDOT, upon call, for the US 231 Branigin Bridge.
- \$6.2 million to the City of Lafayette for the Twyckenham Bridge.
- 33 bridges to repair or replace following annual inspections to determine their needs.
- Replace 2 bridges per year.
- Rehabilitate 6 bridges per year.
- Bridges on S. 9th Street, S. 18th Street, Concord Road, and Brady lane due to widening plans by the City of Lafayette.

The Cum Bridge Annual Operating Budget is \$3.2 million. This is derived from projected revenue based on \$.06 per \$100.00 plus approximately \$300,000.00 interest. A \$.02 per \$100.00 reduction plus interest will equal \$1.3 million.

Council President Dave Byers, who was in the audience, said it might be possible to lower the request to \$.01 plus interest if Community Corrections pays the County rent for its facility.

Commissioner Shedd said she prefers to examine other areas that can be tapped for revenue before reducing the Cum Bridge rate.

President Knochel said the County has never been repaid for money loaned to Community Corrections to build their facility. Charging Community Corrections for rent as well as 911 for its space at the Jail was proposed by the Council but he thinks it is premature to count on these sources without the facts.

Commissioner Shedd asked the Auditor how the County's portion of the Gaming money that is being distributed to non-riverboat counties can be used. Auditor Plantenga explained that the County's portion is \$340,000.00 but has restricted use. He said the 20% that must be used for Police/Fire Pensions has already been figured into the 2003 Budget. Another allowable use is for Drainage or Drainage Projects. He said it has come to light within the

last twelve hours that money from the General Fund may have been used to start-up the General Drain Fund. If that can be verified, he said the remainder of the \$340,000.00 Gaming money could be put into the General Drain Fund and the General Drain Fund money could be used to pay back the County General Fund.

Attorney Luhman explained that restoration of the Cum Bridge rate to its current \$.06 would have to be done prior to August 2, 2003 by the Commissioners in a public hearing.

Commissioner Benson suggested moving MITS Department line items Hardware Maintenance and Software from the General Fund into Cum Cap. Attorney Luhman said whatever could be determined as reasonable costs related to the capital expense of purchasing computers and software could be included as a cumulative capital improvement.

President Knochel said he thinks reducing the Cum Bridge rate is the most expedient route to accommodate the needs of the General Fund for 2003.

Commissioner Shedd said she is willing to lower the Cum Bridge Levy this time but wants the County to work with our Legislators to raise our tax rate even though it will mean a tax increase. She said she doesn't see any other relief in sight and doesn't want to cut more positions.

Councilmember Byers thinks the Council needs to continue to look at increasing the revenue through increased user fees.

Attorney Luhman explained his drafted resolution is based on the County Council's request yesterday to reduce the 2003 Cum Bridge Levy to a \$2 million limit in 2003 so the General Fund Levy can be increased by the excess of over \$900,000.00 and transfer the anticipated Cum Bridge interest for 2003 of approximately \$347,000.00 to generate an additional \$1.2 million for the General Fund for 2003 only.

- Commissioner Benson moved to reduce the Cum Bridge Fund Levy to generate \$2,250,000.00 in addition to Cum Bridge Fund Interest to benefit the General Fund for 2003 only, seconded by Commissioner Shedd.

Attorney Luhman read Resolution 2002-30-CM:

(quote)

2002-30-CM

**RESOLUTION REDUCING
CUMULATIVE BRIDGE FUND TAX LEVY
UNDER IC 8-16-3-1 et seq.**

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of Tippecanoe County, Indiana (Commissioners) have heretofore established Cumulative Bridge Fund pursuant to IC 8-16-3-1 and 6-1.1-41;

WHEREAS, the Tippecanoe County Council (Council) has requested the Commissioners to reduce the maximum Cumulative Bridge Fund Tax rate to an amount sufficient to generate a maximum levy of \$2,250,000 for the year 2003 only, so as to allow the County General Fund rate and levy to be increased; and to transfer the interest earned on the Cumulative Bridge Fund in fiscal year 2003 to the General Fund; all for the purpose of enabling the Council to adopt a budget for fiscal year 2003 without imposing across the board salary reductions for County employees; and

WHEREAS, because real property reassessments have yet to be completed the Commissioners are unable to determine the exact tax rates to be imposed to generate such maximum levy for the year 2003; and

WHEREAS, the Commissioners desire to so reduce such rate and levy and transfer such interest for such purposes for the year 2003 only;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the maximum Tippecanoe County Cumulative Bridge

Fund tax rate shall be reduced in the year 2003 only to the rate required to generate a maximum Cumulative Bridge Fund levy of \$2,250,000;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the interest on the Cumulative Bridge Fund for the year 2003 only shall be transferred to the County General Fund.

Duly adopted by the following vote of the members of said Board of Commissioners, this 28th day of August, 2002.

NAY

AYE

John Knochel, President

KD Benson, Vice President

Ruth Shedd, Member

ATTEST:

Robert Plantenga, Auditor of
Tippecanoe County

(unquote)

- After receiving no comment from the audience, the motion to approve Resolution 2002-30-CM carried.

President Knochel said the Council also discussed charging rent to departments such as Community Corrections and 911 that operate from user fees but occupy County-owned facilities at no charge.

Community Corrections Executive Director Dave Kuebler said it would be hard for him to commit to paying rent for the Community Corrections Facility at this time since they are in the second year of a two year grant from the Department of Corrections (DOC) that doesn't expire until June 30, 2003. Since their grant year runs from July 1 through June 30, they will present a new two year budget to the DOC for approval in November for July 1, 2003 through June 30, 2005. He said their current two year budget is based on \$1,657,325.00 from Project Income (user fees) collections and \$467,611.00 from the DOC. By statute, Project Income is to be used for the operation of Community Corrections' programs. Their current account balance is \$957,296.80. If the DOC approves and Attorney Luhman's research determines it is allowable, Mr. Kuebler said if they can pay their way they should.

Sheriff William "Smokey" Anderson said 911 occupies approximately 1,100 sq ft in the Jail. A check with a real estate agent showed square footage rental costs from \$6.50 per sq ft per year to \$12.00 per sq ft per year with an extra \$1.00 per sq ft per year charge for such things as utilities and snow removal. Based on these numbers, he estimated an annual rent of \$11,000 for 911 is doable and a legitimate use of those funds. Sheriff Anderson noted the West Lafayette Police Department has an ordinance that allows them to collect for vin checks for the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. Since the Sheriff's Department does hundreds of these annually, he may ask Mr. Luhman to draft a similar ordinance to bring in additional revenue. He also hopes to maximize the number of DOC inmates housed for additional revenue when the new jail pod is completed.

- Commissioner Benson moved to authorize the Attorney to investigate alternate funding sources for additional revenue, seconded by Commissioner Shedd; motion carried.

County Surveyor Steve Murray, who was in the audience, hopes the Commissioners and Council remember the various departments that took major "hits" to their budgets to help out and grant them additional funds if they become available.

ADJOURNMENT

- Commissioner Benson moved to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Shedd; motion carried.

Robert A. Plantenga, Auditor

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF
THE COUNTY OF TIPPECANOE**

John L. Knochel, President

KD Benson, Vice President

Ruth E. Shedd, Member

ATTEST:

Robert A. Plantenga, Auditor